

## Session 2

### Teachscape Section 3 Read Aloud

#### Read the Guidelines

Before you visit Karrie Woodard's classroom, take a few minutes to read about the components of a thoughtful and engaging read aloud. Then proceed to the *Visit the Classroom* video examples, observe two read alouds, and see these components in action.

#### Before the Read Aloud:

1. **Gather the children:** Reading a book aloud for the first time will usually be a whole-class activity. Use your observations and assessments to decide how and when to break the class up into smaller groups.
2. **Set the mood:** A little bit of effort can go a long way in setting the right mood for a given story. Music, a costume, or even a simple prop can enliven a read aloud (e.g., a hand mirror for a reading of *Sleeping Beauty*).
3. **Position yourself:** Make sure that all of the children can see you and the book clearly. It is important for them to be able to see the illustrations and to understand that the words they're hearing, the words they see on the page, and the book's pictures are all telling the same story. And though most early-childhood readers are pre-literate, it is developmentally useful for them to see you read aloud, from left to right, as your finger moves across the page.
4. **Introduce book concepts:** Introduce the book's title, author, and illustrator. Question the children about these terms, and explain them if necessary. Be careful not to "drill and kill."
5. **Encourage first impressions:** Once they've heard the title and seen the cover art, ask the children to make predictions about the story. Use this as an opportunity to assess whether or not the book's central concept is familiar to them, and to introduce new rare or root words before the read aloud itself has begun. (These will usually be title words, or words pertaining to the cover art.)

### During the Read Aloud:

1. **Make it fun and engaging:** A clear and enthusiastic reading of the story will help maintain the children's interest. Read fluently and dramatically. Remember to make eye contact. Emphasize rhyming text, and use sound effects and role-playing to further draw the children into the story.
2. **Address questions in the moment:** Don't be afraid to interrupt the story-in-progress. Effective read alouds are a highly interactive experience. Don't be too concerned if the children "wiggle around," or engage in quiet side discussions. This is age-appropriate behavior.
3. **Emphasize rare and root words:** Question the children about new vocabulary words when they appear in the text. This sort of questioning is part of the ongoing informal assessments that should be built into your read alouds.
4. **Encourage personal connections:** Ask the children to express what they already know about the book and its characters or themes, and how they relate to anything in the book. By encouraging them to make personal connections with the material, you are validating their prior knowledge about the world.

### After the Read Aloud:

1. **Review the story:** Revisit and reinforce concepts and vocabulary, especially those that are still not entirely familiar to the children. This does not need to be a complete reread of the story, but rather an opportunity for review.
2. **Lead a guided Q & A:** Question the children about the story and prompt them to recall plot elements, discuss the characters and their interactions, and speculate about alternative outcomes.